



Fire and Rescue Service

**Operational Statistics Bulletin for England 2007/08**





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**Operational Statistics Bulletin for England 2007/08**

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# Introduction

This Bulletin contains operational statistics relating to the Fire and Rescue Services in England for the financial year 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008. It focuses mainly on Personnel, Health & Safety and Operational Activities. The data is sourced from the Fire and Rescue Service Performance and Management Information Database which holds operational statistics received from the Integrated Risk Management Planning Returns from all Fire and Rescue Services in England. Detailed tables accompanying this bulletin, and data from IRMP returns (Fire Protection) are provided in the Appendices at:

[www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/frsoperationalstats2007-08](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/fire/frsoperationalstats2007-08)

*Fire Statistics, United Kingdom, 2007*, an analysis of fire incident statistics in the UK, will be published in spring 2009.



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# Section 1

## Fire and rescue service personnel

### Number of staff in post on 31 March 2008

**Table 1.1: Number of staff in post on 31 March 2004-2008**

<i>Number of staff in post (FTE)<sup>1</sup></i>					
	<i>Wholetime</i>	<i>Retained duty system<sup>2</sup></i>	<i>Fire control</i>	<i>Non-uniformed</i>	<b><i>Total</i></b>
2004	31,826	10,853	1,435	6,220	<b>50,334</b>
2005	31,097	11,037	1,448	6,762	<b>50,344</b>
2006	30,596	11,321	1,470	7,231	<b>50,618</b>
2007	30,558	11,860	1,491	7,390	<b>51,300</b>
2008	30,580	11,744	1,522	7,800	<b>51,646</b>

1. In full time equivalents (FTEs) except retained duty system firefighters.

2. In 24-hour units of cover.

- 1.1 There were 51,646 full-time equivalents fire and rescue service staff in England as at 31 March 2008, representing an increase of 3 per cent over the last five years.

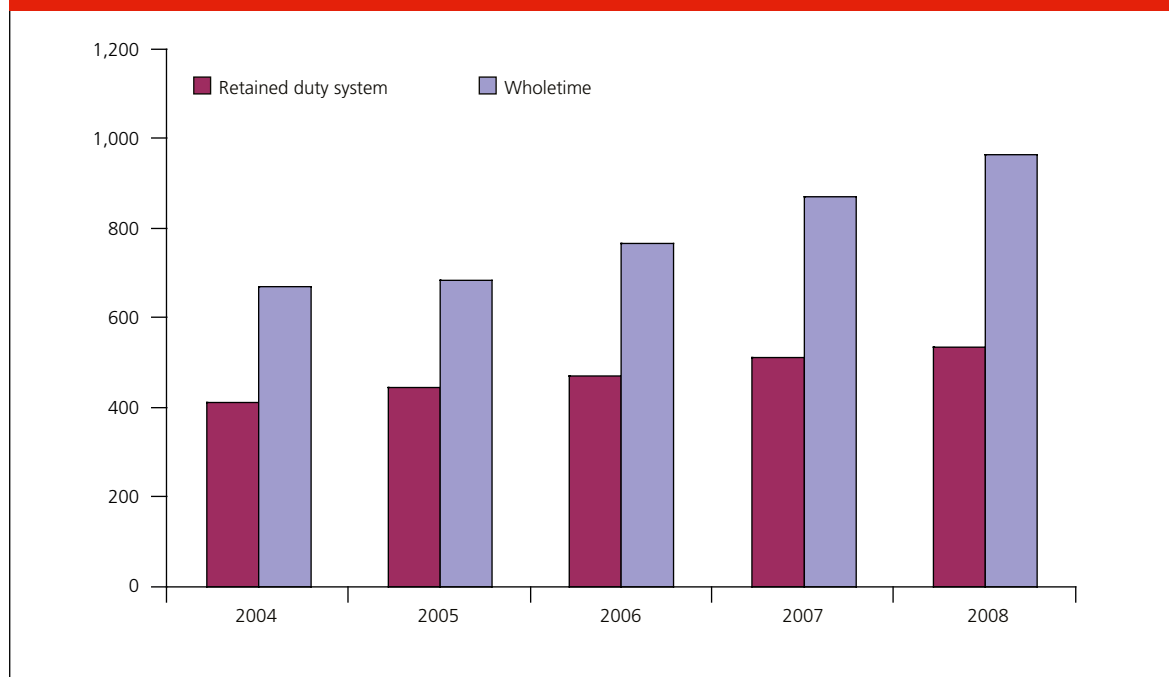
### Firefighter strength

**Table 1.2: Firefighter strength (FTE) by Role – 2008**

<i>Role</i>	<i>Wholetime</i>	<i>Retained duty System</i>	<b><i>Total</i></b>
Brigade Manager	168		<b>168</b>
Area Manager	221		<b>221</b>
Group Manager	706	3	<b>709</b>
Station Manager	1,608	78	<b>1,686</b>
Watch Manager	4,606	1,011	<b>5,617</b>
Crew Manager	4,104	2,025	<b>6,129</b>
Firefighter	19,168	8,626	<b>27,794</b>
<b>All Firefighters</b>	<b>30,580</b>	<b>11,744</b>	<b>42,324</b>

- 1.2 As at 31 March 2008, there were 42,324 full-time equivalents operational staff (wholetime and retained duty system firefighters) in England. This includes all roles of firefighters including senior managers.
- 1.3 Firefighters in England are mostly male and white – 3.3 per cent of firefighters are women and 2.8 per cent of firefighters are from ethnic minority backgrounds.

**Figure 1: Women firefighters in England 2004–2008**



- 1.4 Over the last five years, the proportion of women firefighters has increased from 2.4 per cent in 2004 to 3.3 per cent in 2008. Over the same period the number of firefighters from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased from 2.1 per cent to 2.8 per cent. However the number of firefighters for whom no ethnicity is recorded has risen from 3.2 per cent to 6.7 per cent.

**Table 1.3: Firefighters – Gender & Ethnicity as at 31 March 2004–2005**

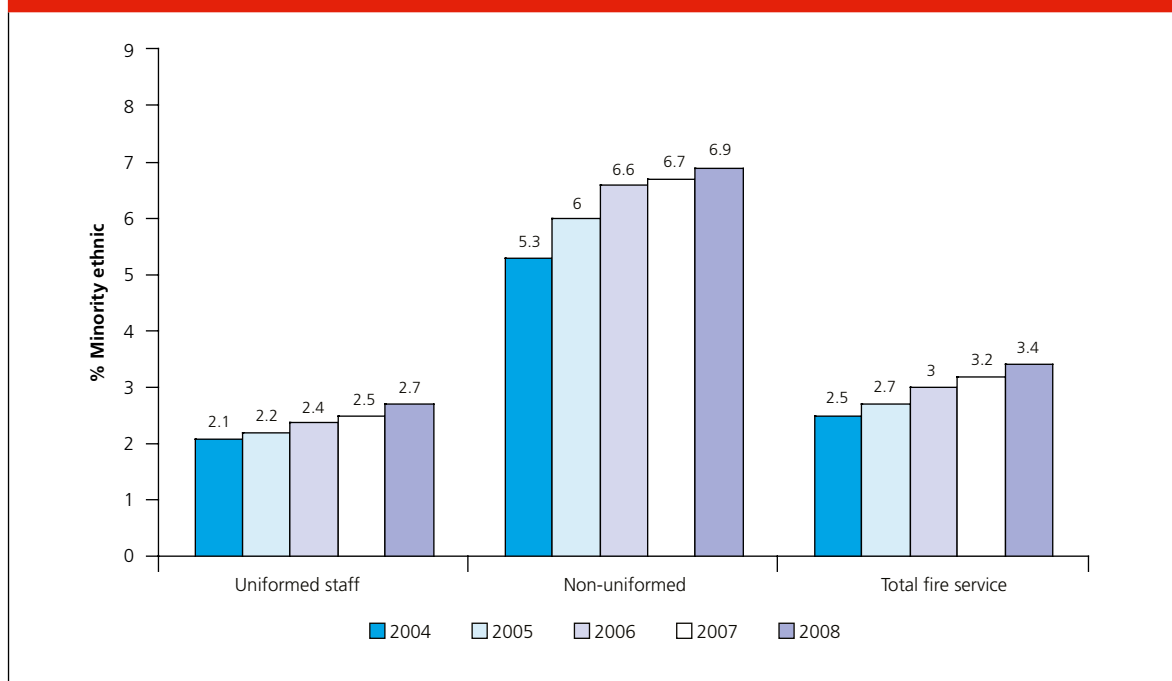
	<i>Gender</i>		<i>Ethnicity</i>		
	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Ethnic minority</i>	<i>Not stated</i>
	<i>per cent</i>				
2004	97.6	2.4	94.7	2.1	3.2
2005	97.5	2.5	94.3	2.2	3.4
2006	97.2	2.8	92.7	2.5	4.8
2007	96.9	3.1	90.7	2.6	6.7
2008	96.7	3.3	90.5	2.8	6.7

## Control and Support staff

- 1.5 As at 31 March 2008 there were 1,522 fire control staff (FTE), 2 per cent higher than in 2007.
- 1.6 The total number of non-uniformed support staff (FTE) continued to increase. At 31 March 2008, there were 7,800 non-uniformed support staff, 6 per cent higher than the previous year.

## Ethnicity

Figure 2: Proportion of minority ethnic staff in England FRS 2004–2008



- 1.7 Over the past five years ethnic minority staff in the fire service have increased from 2.5 per cent in 2004 to 3.4 per cent at 31 March 2008. *See figure 2.*

## Joiners and Leavers

- 1.8 Over the year 2007/08 there were 45,378 applications to join the Fire Service, with an estimated 7 per cent of these successful. In 2007/08, 19 FRSs did not recruit wholetime duty system firefighters, eleven did not recruit retained duty system staff, 12 did not recruit fire control staff and 6 did not recruit non-uniformed staff for the year.

<b>Table 1.4: Applications and Joiners, 2007/08</b>			
	<i>Applicants</i>		<i>Joiners</i>
	<i>Number</i>	<i>% of applicants successful</i>	
Wholetime	20,078	4	1,014
Retained duty system	2,978	25	752
Fire control	2,257	8	122
Non-uniformed	18,323	6	1,156
Other Recruitment	1,742	12	179
<b>Total</b>	<b>45,378</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3,223</b>

1.9 During 2007/08, 1,766 operational staff joined the Fire and Rescue Service – 1,014 wholetime duty system and 752 retained duty system firefighters. 9.6 per cent of these joiners were women. See table 1.4a.

<b>Table 1.4a Joiners by gender and ethnicity, 2007/08</b>							
	<i>Operational staff<sup>1</sup></i>			<i>Other recruitment</i>			<b>Total All staff</b>
	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>	
White	152	1,311	1,463	704	582	1,286	<b>2,749</b>
Ethnic minority	4	87	91	45	46	91	<b>182</b>
Not stated	13	199	212	42	38	80	<b>292</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>1,597</b>	<b>1,766</b>	<b>791</b>	<b>666</b>	<b>1,457</b>	<b>3,223</b>

1. Wholetime and Retained Duty system staff

1.10 During 2007/08, 3,685 staff left the fire and rescue service – 6.6 per cent of all staff (including those who leave and join another service), while a total of 3,223 staff joined the Fire Service. 5.6 per cent of these new entrants were from ethnic minority backgrounds.

1.11 Wholetime duty system firefighters who left the service in 2007/08 reached 1,467 (equivalent to 5 per cent of staff). This is 6 per cent higher than in 2006/07, mainly due to an increase in compulsory/voluntary age retirements – 62 per cent of wholetime duty system firefighters who leave are compulsory/voluntary age retirements. See table 1.5.

**Table 1.5: Leavers 2007/08**

<i>Reasons for leaving the fire service</i>	<i>Number of staff leaving</i>				<b>Total</b>
	<i>Wholetime</i>	<i>Retained duty system</i>	<i>Fire control</i>	<i>Non-uniformed</i>	
Dismissal on disciplinary grounds/poor performance	49	46	1	28	<b>124</b>
Medical discharge	54	12	3	8	<b>77</b>
Resignation to take other employment	210	291	46	440	<b>987</b>
Personal/work commitments*		303			<b>303</b>
Moving away from catchment area*		77			<b>77</b>
Compulsory/voluntary age retirement	909	45	8	130	<b>1,092</b>
Other reasons	245	356	50	374	<b>1,025</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,467</b>	<b>1,130</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>980</b>	<b>3,685</b>
					<i>per cent</i>
Dismissal on disciplinary grounds/poor performance	3	4	1	3	3
Medical discharge	4	1	3	1	2
Resignation to take other employment	14	26	43	45	27
Personal/work commitments*	0	27	0	0	8
Moving away from catchment area*	0	7	0	0	2
Compulsory/voluntary age retirement	62	4	7	13	30
Other reasons	17	32	46	38	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

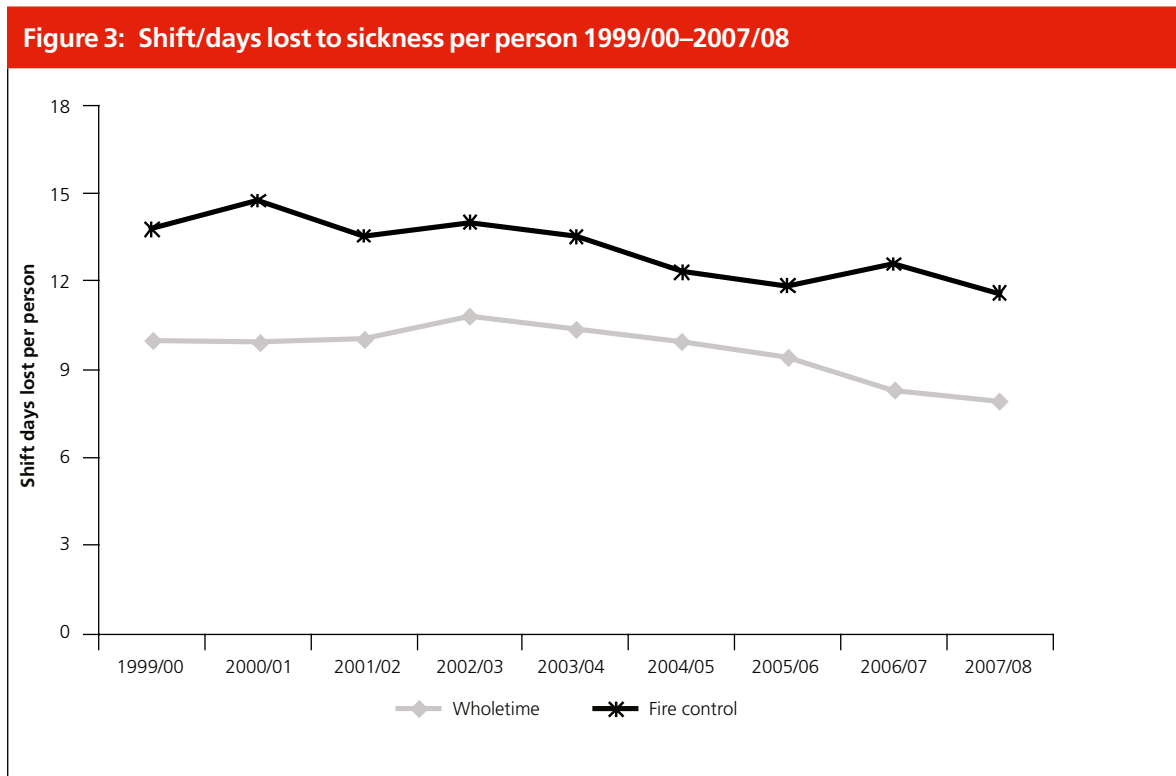
\*Reasons for leaving applicable to retained duty system firefighters only.

1.12 Retained duty system firefighters who left the service in 2007/08 numbered 1,130 (about 8 per cent of staff), and 11 per cent higher than in 2006/07.

# Section 2

## Health and safety

### Sickness absence



- 2.1 During 2007/08, there were an average of 7.7 shifts/days lost per person by wholetime firefighters and 11.9 shifts/days lost per person by fire control staff.
- 2.2 The sickness level rates for fire control staff have decreased by 8 per cent from the previous year, while those for wholetime personnel has decreased by 7 per cent.
- 2.3 Ill health retirement for the Fire and Rescue Service continued to decline. In 2007/08, the number of ill health retirements dropped to 76 from 155 in 2006/07. The corresponding ill health retirements per 1,000 employees dropped from 2.8 in 2006/07 to 1.5 in 2007/08. See table 2.1 and appendix 10.

## Retirements

**Table 2.1: Retirements per 1,000 employees, England 2005/06–2007/08**

	2005/06			2006/07			2007/08		
	Average strength <sup>1</sup>	Retirements		Average strength <sup>1</sup>	Retirements		Average strength <sup>1</sup>	Retirements	
		Normal	Ill health		Normal	Ill health		Normal	Ill health
Wholetime	30,847	33.9	9.3	30,774	26.8	3.8	30,678	29.7	1.7
Retained duty system	11,188	10.5	1.3	14,070	3.4	1.1	7,406	6.1	1.6
Fire control	1,459	6.9	6.2	1,548	9.7	1.9	4,327	3.5	0.7
Non-uniformed	6,973	11.5	3.2	8,280	15.0	2.2	8,124	16.0	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,467</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>54,670</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>50,535</b>	<b>21.8</b>	<b>1.5</b>

1. Average strength figure taken over 2 years, at 31 March.

## Firefighters' injuries

- 2.4 Five firefighters sustained fatal injuries attending fires during 2007/08; four died at a fire incident in Warwickshire and one died at the scene of incident in Hertfordshire.

**Table 2.3: Total injuries sustained by wholetime and retained duty system firefighters during training, operational incidents and routine activities 2003/04–2007/08**

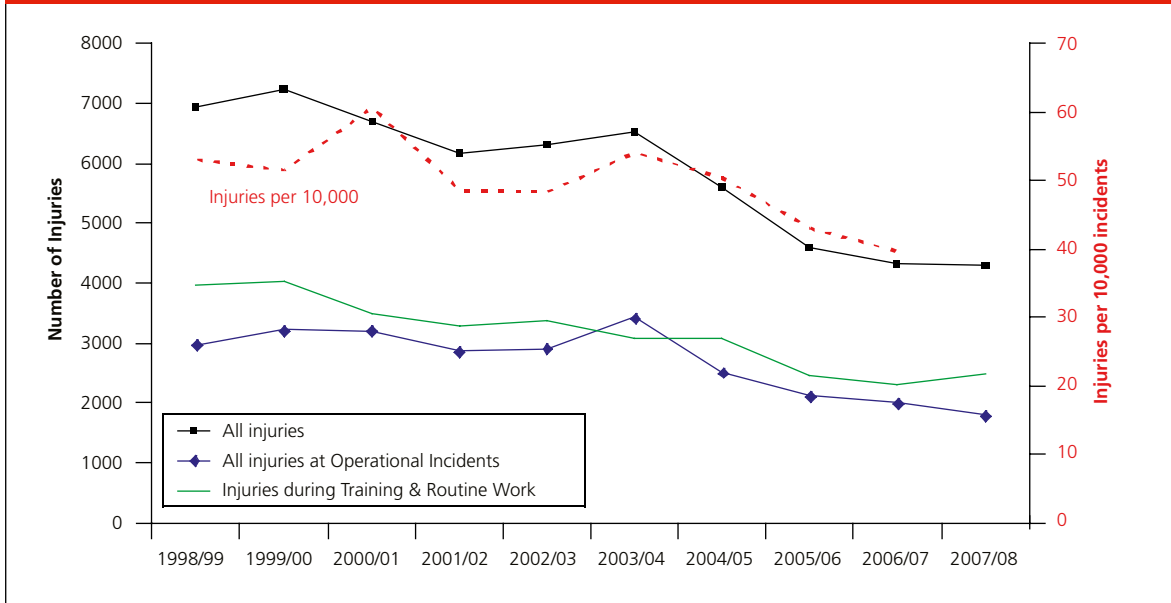
	RIDDOR <sup>1</sup>			All personnel injured
	Over 3 day injuries	Major injuries	Fatal injuries	
2003/04	1,378	91	1	6,512
2004/05	1,208	92	4	5,554
2005/06	955	71	0	4,593
2006/07	939	113	1	4,312
2007/08	910	106	5	4,291

- 2.5 The number of injuries sustained by firefighters (during training, operational incidents and routine activities) in 2007/08 was 4,291 – half a per cent lower than the previous year. The number of RIDDOR<sup>1</sup> “over 3 day” and major injuries also decreased, by 3 and 6 per cent respectively. See *table 3.3 and appendix 11 for more details*.

<sup>1</sup> **Reportable major injuries are:** fracture other than to fingers, thumbs or toes; amputation; dislocation of the shoulder, hip, knee or spine; loss of sight (temporary or permanent); chemical or hot metal burn to the eye or any penetrating injury to the eye; injury resulting from an electric shock or electrical burn leading to unconsciousness or requiring resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours; any other injury: leading to hypothermia, heat-induced illness or unconsciousness; or requiring resuscitation; or requiring admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours; unconsciousness caused by asphyxia or exposure to harmful substance or biological agent; acute illness requiring medical treatment, or loss of consciousness arising from absorption of any substance by inhalation, ingestion or through the skin; acute illness requiring medical treatment where there is reason to believe that this resulted from exposure to a biological agent or its toxins or infected material.

- 2.6 In 2007/08, the total number of injuries sustained by firefighters during operational activities (attending fires and special service incidents) was 1,800 a decrease of 199 (10 per cent) on the previous year.
- 2.7 In 2007/08, there were 12 per cent more injuries sustained during training compared with the previous year.

**Figure 4: Injuries to firefighters – England, 1998/99–2007/08**



# Section 3

## Operational activities

### Fires and non-fire incidents

3.1 Although fires and false alarms related to fires form the majority of incidents attended by the Fire and Rescue Services every year, some one in five incidents attended are not related to fire. Non-fire incidents cover a wide spectrum of activity and include:

- road traffic incidents
- chemical, biological and radioactive exposures and spills
- severe weather conditions such as flooding and high winds; collapsed buildings; and
- rescue of trapped people, including those stuck in lifts.

### Fires and fire false alarms

**Table 3.1: Incidents to which fire and rescue services responded 2004/05 to 2007/08**

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
<b>Fires</b>				<i>Thousands</i>
Primary fires	147.2	137.5	131.1	n/a
Secondary fires	187.9	191.0	201.9	n/a
Chimney fires	6.3	7.0	6.8	n/a
<b>All fires</b>	341.4	335.4	339.8	n/a
<b>False Alarms</b>	360.1	350.0	291.4	n/a
<b>Non-fire incidents</b>				
Road traffic incidents	40.1	42.3	40.7	38.9
Non-road traffic incidents	118.3	114.7	125.3	125.8
<b>All</b>	158.4	157.0	166.0	164.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>859.9</b>	<b>842.4</b>	<b>797.2</b>	–

n/a – not available, 2007/08 incidents will be available in spring 2009

## Non-fire incidents

<b>Table 3.2: Non-fire incidents in England, 2005/06–2007/08</b>						
<i>Type of incident</i>	<i>2005/06</i>		<i>2006/07</i>		<i>2007/08</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Road traffic incidents	42,308	27	40,707	25	38,867	24
Non-road traffic incidents	114,713	73	125,295	75	125,821	76
of which:						
Spills and leaks	9,188	6	8,863	5	7,933	5
Water – removal/provision	10,193	6	11,347	7	14,334	9
Effecting entry	13,494	9	13,971	8	13,857	8
Lift release	24,473	16	23,801	14	22,955	14
Other	57,365	37	67,313	41	66,742	41
<b>Total non-fire incidents</b>	<b>157,021</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>166,002</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>164,688</b>	<b>100</b>

3.2 Attendances at road traffic incidents were down slightly, by about 4.5 per cent on the previous year. Attendances at non-road traffic incidents increased by less the half a per cent; they also accounted for the majority of the non-fire incidents attended by fire and rescue services (76per cent). See table 3.2.

## Fire Safety Audits/inspections

- 3.3 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 came into effect in October 2006 and 2007/08 represents its first full year of its operation.
- 3.4 FRSs deliver their enforcement duties through locally determined, risk-based programmes of audit (or inspection) visits to non-domestic premises. These programmes form part of each FRS’s Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).
- 3.5 FRSs are required to prioritise audits (inspections) and enforcement action according to the level of risk within individual types of premises. Table 3.3 shows that FRSs are focusing their audit (inspection) activities on those premises which represent the highest risks – for example 29 per cent of care homes were audited during 2007/08 whilst the figure for, lower risk, offices was 4 per cent.

Table 3.3: Number of Fire Safety audits carried out – 2007/08

Type of premises	Premises (Est) <sup>1</sup>			Audits			Average time per Audit (Hrs)	
	Number of premises	% of premises Audited	Number of audits	% Satisfactory	Time spent on all audits (Hrs)	Satisfactory audit	Unsatisfactory audit	
Hospitals	3,300	18	582	64	2,210	6.0	8.8	
Care homes	24,700	29	7,175	60	18,980	4.4	5.7	
HMO tenements <sup>2</sup>	231,900	0	1,151	49	1,610	2.9	4.3	
Purpose built flats >= 4 storeys	20,600	4	852	60	1,250	2.4	6.6	
Hostels	5,400	14	772	53	1,610	3.9	6.2	
Hotels	26,600	27	7,248	45	12,930	4.0	5.6	
Houses converted to flats	72,000	1	837	55	1,910	4.1	5.3	
Other sleeping accommodation	75,000	4	2,757	60	6,350	3.8	4.7	
Further education	4,700	10	457	61	1,190	4.3	5.8	
Public buildings	21,500	5	1,086	53	2,480	4.3	4.6	
Licensed premises	95,300	10	9,599	56	18,880	3.5	5.1	
Schools	42,300	7	3,065	57	7,060	4.0	5.5	
Shops	253,500	5	13,776	66	26,530	2.9	5.1	
Other premises open to public	48,600	5	2,509	63	6,300	4.0	5.4	
Factories or warehouses	136,100	5	6,229	64	14,220	3.5	5.0	
Offices	186,100	4	8,263	68	17,760	3.2	4.5	
Other	103,100	2	2,086	68	4,720	3.3	4.9	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,350,800</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>68,444</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>145,980</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>5.2</b>	

1. Number of premises are estimated from figures provided by FRSs and Valuation Office Agency (VOA). Figures from VOA relate to 2007

2. Number of HMOs taken from HS statistical appendix

#### Notes

- Information not available for Cumbria, Lincolnshire & North Yorkshire
- Data provided by Leicestershire and London incomplete
- HMO tenements, purpose built flats and houses converted to flats may be audited by the local authority under different legislation. Those audits do not appear here.

**Table 3.4: Outcomes from unsatisfactory Fire Safety audits–2007/08**

	<i>Enforcement notices</i>		<i>Prohibition notices</i>		<i>Alterations Notices</i>	<i>Number of premises satisfactory following enforcement action</i>
	<i>Informal notifications</i>	<i>Article 30</i>	<i>Article 31</i>	<i>Prosecutions (article 32)</i>	<i>Article 29</i>	
Hospitals	251	24	0	0	1	34
Care homes	2,997	172	1	0	2	426
HMO tenements	755	147	63	10	1	119
Purpose built flats >= 4 storeys	260	67	3	0	0	55
Hostels	320	56	5	0	0	47
Hotels	3,729	947	71	7	6	666
Houses converted to flats	416	66	17	0	0	55
Other sleeping accommodation	1,192	116	19	1	1	168
Further education	191	33		1	1	35
Public buildings	489	21	2	0	2	90
Licensed premises	4,144	714	104	6	9	850
Schools	1,594	122	4	0	6	181
Shops	5,074	749	105	15	15	1,006
Other premises open to public	1,007	95	14	1	0	170
Factories or warehouses	2,813	248	21	1	8	422
Offices	3,358	201	12	0	5	677
Other	613	62	2	0	0	121
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,203</b>	<b>3,840</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>5,122</b>

**Notes**

1. Information not available for Cumbria, Essex, Lincolnshire & North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire (Alteration notices)
2. Data provided by Leicestershire and London incomplete (information not available for Cumbria, Essex, South Yorkshire & North Yorkshire)

3.6 During 2007/08 Fire and Rescue Services reported undertaking over 68,000 fire safety audits of which compliance in 60 per cent was judged to be satisfactory. 40 per cent of audits showed an unsatisfactory level of compliance. These led to over 29,000 informal notifications, 3,840 enforcement notices, 443 prohibition notices, 57 alteration notices and 42 prosecutions under article 32 (failure to comply with any part of the order). See table 3.4.

# Glossary of terms

**Wholetime firefighter** A person whose main employment is a firefighter regardless of their role.

**Retained duty system (RDS) firefighter** A person who contracts to be available for agreed periods of time for fire-fighting purposes, but who could have an alternative full-time employment.

**Fire control staff** Uniformed personnel who are employed to work in fire and rescue service control centres to answer emergency calls and deal with mobilising, communications, and related activities, regardless of rank.

**Non-uniformed staff** Generally support/administrative staff employed by a Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA).

**Operational personnel** Wholetime and retained firefighters irrespective of role.

**24 hour units of cover** The number of staff required, under a particular duty system adopted to provide continuous cover over a 24-hour period.

**Attendance** Predetermined resources mobilised to an incident, based upon risk analysis.

## Erratum

Section 3.3 of the 2006/07 operational statistics bulletin should read:

Ill health retirement for the Fire and Rescue Service continued to decline. In 2006/07, the number of ill health retirements dropped from 332 in 2005/06 to 155, the lowest level since the peak in 2001/02.

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